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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 22-23, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 22-23, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. EXTRAORDINARY STATUS AT ISKENDERUN PORT

Cumhuriyet/Hurriyet: Security measures increased in Iskenderun, the port where armed American troops have been deployed and military equipment has been unloaded. Officials have been warned against sabotage and suicide attacks. The Ministry of Health instructed hospitals in town to stock a good quantity of Atropine, particularly used against poisonous gas. Iskenderun Port has been unofficially declared a "Forbidden Zone" by the Brigade Command who overtook the security at the port. Protection of US military equipment is provided by American troops while the Turkish soldiers provide exterior security. Americans staying in local hotels and visiting various spots in town are escorted by jandarma, and their security is provided by police and soldiers.

3. Military Movements in the Area

Cumhuriyet/Hurriyet/Evrensel/Milli Gazete/Radikal: The Commander of US Forces in Europe, Gen. Burwell Bell, accompanied by Turkish military officers, inspected Mersin and Iskenderun ports yesterday and flew to Incirlik AB by helicopter. Cumhuriyet: The Turkish General Staff announced that only after signing a MOU with Washington, was military equipment dispatched at Iskenderun port. The TGS emphasized that the shipment did not contain any combat components. Radikal: Based on the permission given by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the US military delegation conducted inspections at Gaziantep airport yesterday. The American delegation undertook studies to determine what would be needed at the airport to give services to heavy tonnage cargo planes and to provide secure flights. Hurriyet: Activities continue at Iskenderun and Tasucu ports which are ready for war ships to dock. The Iskenderun port where 522 military vehicles, including Hummers carrying missile batteries, were unloaded, resembles a military headquarters. Following unloading of military equipment, 290 US soldiers from Incirlik AB were also dispatched to the port where containers have been used to hide the military equipment. Although no military equipment has been unloaded at Tasucu port, the port's yard has been fenced with barbed wire.

4. Anti-War Legal Measures

Cumhuriyet/Hurriyet/Evrensel: A group of lawyers affiliated with Tunceli Bar Association brought charges against those responsible for breaching the Constitution by allowing US soldiers to enter Turkey from Mersin and Iskenderun ports.

5. Death in Local Prison

Turkiye: Levent Satin, 25, who was imprisoned for theft and moved from Gaziantep prison to Adana's E-type Indoor Prison to receive mental treatment at Psychotherapy Hospital, was found dead in his cell. An investigation was launched as the body

was taken to the forensic medicine for examination.

[16. Foreign Christians on Trial](#)

Turkiye: A hearing concerning the "Love for Messiah Jesus Christ" group in Gaziantep started at the 2nd General Criminal Court. The group's representative in Turkey, Wilber Miller, and Gaziantep representative John Schutz left the court without attending the trial when they ran into press. The group's attorney, Mahmut Oktem, and the plaintiff, attorney and DYP provincial chairman, Sermet Atay attended the hearing. A sentence of from one month to six months of imprisonment is being sought for Miller and Schutz for opposing the "Association Law", "Meeting, Demonstration and Marching Law."

[17. Turkish Parliamentary Human Rights Group's Anti-Turkish Christian Comments Criticized](#)

Milliyet: The Turkish National Assembly's Human Rights Commission's sub-committee which held inspections in Mardin determined that Syriac Christians could constitute a problem for the unitary structure of Turkey in the future. The sub-committee's report received adverse reactions. CHP's Mardin deputy, Muharrem Dogan, said Syriacs were not a danger but a benefit for Turkey, and added that the sub-committee was misinformed, there was no such danger in the region. MP Dogan said "We grew up together with these people, we are cohabiting. That they are a danger for Turkey is not true. This is discrimination, racialism and abuse of religion. Their religion may be different. They believe in the Bible."

[18. Ocalan Supporters arrested](#)

Milli Gazete: Three Ataturk University (Erzurum) students writing pro-PKK/KADEK slogans such as "The Apocus are coming" "Leader Apo" "Long Live Apo, Long Live KADEK" in spray paint in three quarters of Erzurum were arrested by anti-terror police. The suspects were taken to Erzurum State Security Court following their interrogation by police.

[19. Turks Plan for possible N. Iraq Entry](#)

Milliyet: The Turkish Armed Forces who will enter Northern Iraq to cope with influx of refugees and install security equipment almost completed their preparations. With these personnel, the number of 2nd Army affiliate troops at the border region reached 100 thousand. The military units under Gen. Fevzi Turkeri's command were inoculated against contagious diseases. 50 thousand Turkish soldiers are expected to enter Northern Iraq if the Turkish Parliament decides to join the operation. Jandarma General Command affiliated jandarma units will be in charge of relief efforts, while military units affiliated with the land Forces Command will provide security.

[110. Siirt Elections](#)

Milliyet: Prior to the March 9 by-elections where AKP chair, Tayyip Erdogan, will run for parliament, Interior Minister, Abdulkadir Aksu; Public Works and Resettlement Minister, Zeki Ergezen, and 7 AKP MPs visited Siirt. Cumhuriyet reports that Mr. Erdogan plans to visit his constituency twice during the election, and will make his first visit to Siirt on February 28 or March 01. DEHAP who got 26,980 votes in November 3 general elections in Siirt announced that they would cooperate with CHP in the upcoming election. There are a total of 119,210 registered voters in Siirt province, but only 88,397 voted on November 3. DEHAP was the clear winner of the November 3 elections in Siirt, but because it did not pass the 10 percent national bar, it was unable to elect any deputies. DEHAP's Deputy

Secretary General claimed if they joined CHP, CHP

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could win the three seats in Siirt.

11. Counterfeit Iraqi Lira in Mersin

Turkiye/Bolge: In Mersin province, the jandarma raided a printing house, and seized 5.5 trillion Turkish Liras (\$-3.3 million) worth of counterfeit Iraqi Dinars and 1.5 trillion Turkish Liras (USD 900, 000 equivalent) worth of fake detergent. 8 persons were ordered held by the court.

12. Fears of OHAL's Return

Turkiye: Inhabitants of East and Southeast Turkey are uncomfortable about the possibility of declaring state of emergency in the region again if war starts. It is also speculated that because of the deployment of US troops at Sabiha Gokcen Airport in Istanbul, Istanbul might become the terrorists' target, and in the light of such a danger, state of emergency could be declared in Istanbul, too. Another worry is that the innocent Kurdish people in the region might suffer in the combat with the PKK. Claims that the US will hire former village guards to fight in Northern Iraq and pay them between 2 to 4 thousand dollars has created a bomb effect in the region.

13. Local Business Boom Due to Incoming Americans

Milli Gazete: An American delegation, in Mardin for the modernization of the Mardin airport, is looking for hotels to use during the possible war on Iraq. The US delegation is reported to have had talks with officials of the historical Erdoba houses, Hotel Bilen in Mardin, Nezirhan Installations in Nusaybin, and Oztopraklar Hotel in Kiziltepe. The delegation also attempted to hire idle factories in the Industrial Zone for storage purposes.

14. Alleged Mistreatment of Anti-war Protestors

Evrensel: In a press conference held by Adana's HRA and Association for Assistance and Solidarity with Inmates' and Prisoners' Families it was claimed that 38 persons were imprisoned in Adana and Ceyhan, and that the inmates were subjected to various pressure at the E-type prison in Adana. Wardens wanted to cut inmates' hair and mustaches and anyone opposed was attacked and beaten on the soles of their feet by wardens. The press announcement called for putting an end to torture and hold the perpetrators accountable for their actions.

15. MP Denied Access to Iskenderun Port

Hurriyet: CHP's Hatay MP, Gokhan Durgun, who attempted to conduct an inspection at the Iskenderun port where US troops and military equipment are deployed was denied access by Turkish authorities on the grounds that they could not guarantee his physical security. MP Durgun said he had wanted to find out if there was military combat material at the port as reported in the press.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

16. January Exports from GAP Region

Evrensel: The Southeast Anatolian Exporters Union announced that %35 of their exports in January were sent to Italy, Saudi Arabia, United States, and Germany. Italy imported 5.5 million Dollars worth of dried apricots, cotton yarn, synthetic

yarn, and cotton fabric while Saudi Arabia bought 5.1 million Dollars worth of synthetic yarn and machinery carpets. \$4.4 million dollars worth of goods were exported to the US, and 4.1 million dollars worth to Germany.

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